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Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia methodology

Reference period February 2020

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Explanatory notes

Introduction

The statistics in this release were compiled from the 2020 iteration of the Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) survey conducted throughout Australia in February of each year as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

This survey provides a comprehensive and coherent dataset on persons experiences relating to job search, job change and labour market participation, combining key elements from previous separate collections:

- [Persons Not in the Labour Force](https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0>) (PNILF) (cat. no. 6220.0)
- [Underemployed Workers](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0>) (UEW) (cat. no. 6265.0)
- [Job Search Experience](https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0>) (JSE) (cat. no. 6222.0) and
- [Labour Mobility](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6209.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6209.0>) (LMOB) (cat. no.

6209.0).

It informs on the following broad labour market issues: job mobility; job search; participation and increasing participation; underemployment; and marginal attachment. This enables analysis of persons experiences relating to job search, job change and increasing participation, all of which can be cross classified by other employment characteristics such as hours worked, industry, occupation and sector of job, as well as personal characteristics.

The explanatory notes relate to key aspects of the supplementary survey, however, information about survey design, scope, coverage and population benchmarks relevant to the monthly LFS, which also applies to supplementary surveys, can be found in the publication [Labour Force, Australia \(https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) (cat. no. 6202.0).

Reference period

Interviews for the Labour Force Survey are generally conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Sunday between the 5th and 11th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the reference week). For Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM), the reference period will be the labour force weeks of the month of February. While data is collected within those weeks, the reference period in PJSM will sometimes differ according to the subject matter. Where they differ from the reference week, these will be explicitly stated within the data item label or definitions (for example, in the last 3 months, in the last four weeks).

Scope and coverage

The scope of this survey is all people aged 15 years and over, excluding:

- members of the permanent defence forces
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from the Census and estimated populations
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants)
- overseas residents in Australia.

The following exclusions also apply:

- people living in remote parts of Australia
- people living in non-private households such as hotels, university residences, students at boarding schools, patients in hospitals, inmates of prisons and residents of other institutions (e.g. retirement homes, homes for people with disabilities)

- people living in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Coverage rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one household and hence has only one chance of selection in the survey. See the Explanatory Notes of [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/exnote/6202.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/exnote/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) for more details.

Collection method

The collection methodology for the labour supplementary surveys, including Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM), is generally the same as for the Labour Force Survey. Interviews are conducted at the same time as interviews for the LFS, most interviews are conducted by telephone and online electronic collection with some conducted face to face. Information about each household member in scope of the supplementary survey is generally collected from one adult using the 'Any Responsible Adult' (ARA) methodology.

Response rates for the supplementary surveys are generally slightly lower than for the LFS.

Sample design

In February of each year, 7/8ths of the sample for the Labour Force Survey are included within the responding sample of Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM). People in the outgoing rotation group in the LFS are excluded from all supplementary surveys.

For details on the sample design for LFS, see the Explanatory Notes in [Labour Force, Australia \(https://abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/latest-release\)](https://abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/latest-release) (cat. no. 6202.0).

Sample size

The sample size for the February 2020 Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey (after taking into account scope, coverage and sub sampling exclusions) is approximately 21,100 households.

Weighting, benchmarking and estimation

Survey weights are calibrated against population benchmarks to ensure that the survey estimates conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population, rather than the distribution within the sample itself.

When calibrating the weights, the survey sample is grouped into categories based on the following characteristics:

- State or territory

- Capital city or rest of state
- Sex
- Age
- Employed, underemployed, unemployed or not in the labour force.

The PJSM survey benchmarks were based on the most recently available release of [Estimated Resident Population \(ERP\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>) data. Estimates from previous years are also revised using this method. Each year estimates are revised for the previous three years as updated benchmarks become available.

To reduce the impact of seasonality on the different estimates of labour force status, the estimates have been adjusted by factors based on trend LFS estimates. These factors were applied at the State and territory, Sex, employment, underemployment, unemployment and residual not in the labour force levels, based on the trend LFS series as published in the March 2020 issue of [Labour Force, Australia](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/mar-2020) (<https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/mar-2020>) (cat. no. 6202.0). This adjustment accounts for February seasonality and irregular effects.

Revised time series are available from the Data download section of this publication. All data from 2016 to 2020 are comparable with estimates, benchmarks and trend factors published in the March 2020 issue of [Labour Force, Australia](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/mar-2020) (<https://abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/mar-2020>) (cat. no. 6202.0).

Survey output

Data on participation, job search and mobility for people aged 15 years and older, and includes:

- Socio-demographic information.
- Employed persons - Status in employment; hours actually worked; hours usually worked; full-time or part-time status; whether worked and reason worked less hours than usual; whether available to start work; continuous duration with current employer/business; sector; occupation; industry; whether entitled to paid leave; whether retrenched; whether available and/or looking for work; whether promoted and/or transferred; previous occupation; and whether changed industry or occupation.
- Unemployed persons - Duration of job search; whether looked for full-time or part-time work; whether checked or registered with a Job Services Australia/jobactive provider; number of employment offers; whether turned down job offers; reasons for turning down job offers; and whether would move interstate or intrastate.
- Underemployed persons - Underemployment status; whether available and/or looking for work; duration of current period of insufficient work; whether would prefer to change employer to work more hours; whether would prefer to change occupation to work more hours; and whether would move interstate or intrastate.

- Ceased a job - Continuous duration of last job; occupation of last job; industry of last job; status in employment of last job; hours usually work each week in last job; reason for ceasing last job; when began last job; whether entitled to paid leave in last job; and whether changed industry or occupation.
- Persons not in the labour force - Main activity when not in the labour force; time since last job; whether had a job in the last 10 or 20 years; reasons not actively looking for work; whether available to start work; whether preferred full-time or part-time work; intention to enter the labour force; whether wanted to work; whether would move interstate or intrastate; continuous duration of last job; occupation of last job; industry of last job; and whether entitled to paid leave in last job.

Data are also available in TableBuilder, see [Microdata: Participation, Job Search and Mobility \(https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6226.0.00.001\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6226.0.00.001) (cat. no. 6226.0.00.001).

Standards and classifications

Country of birth data are classified according to the [Standard Australian Classification of Countries \(SACC\), 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/1269.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/1269.0) (cat. no. 1269.0).

Occupation data are classified according to [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2013, Version 1.2 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Industry data are classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\), 2006 \(Revision 2.0\) \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (cat. no. 1292.0).

Education data are classified according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0).

Geography data are classified according to the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\), 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

Comparability with Labour Force estimates

Due to differences in the scope, sample size and reference period of this supplementary survey and that of the monthly LFS, the estimation procedure may lead to some small variations between labour force estimates from this survey and those from the LFS.

Comparability with previous surveys

The move to create a consolidated supplementary survey involved a change in collection month for a number of the existing supplementary survey topics, namely JSE, UEW and PNILF moved from the July or September months, to February.

In order to better understand the impacts that the change in timing had, all three surveys (JSE, PNILF and UEW) were conducted in February 2014, in a format that was similar to their current format. This meant that JSE was conducted in July 2013 and PNILF and UEW were conducted in September 2013, and then again in February 2014 in [Persons Not In the Labour Force, Underemployed Workers and Job Search Experience, Australia, February 2014](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0.55.001Main+Features1February%202014?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0.55.001Main+Features1February%202014?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 6226.0.55.001).

Care should be taken when comparing the estimates from PJSM with previous supplementary surveys as Persons Not in the Labour Force (PNILF) and Underemployed Workers (UEW) were previously collected in September, Job Search Experience (JSE) in July, and Labour Mobility (LMOB) was collected in February. Collection of data from the combined PJSM survey was undertaken in February.

Persons Not In the Labour Force (PNILF)

PNILF was first conducted in May 1975 and again in May 1977. From 1979 to 1987 the survey was collected twice a year (March and September). From 1988 to 2013 it was conducted annually in September. Results of previous surveys were published in [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0>) (cat. no. 6220.0).

For more information on the history of changes to PNILF, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 6220.0).

Underemployed Workers (UEW)

UEW was conducted in May 1985, 1988 and 1991. In 1994, the survey became an annual survey and until 2013 was collected each September. Results of previous surveys were published in [Underemployed Workers, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0>) (cat. no. 6265.0).

For more information on the history of changes to UEW, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 6265.0).

Job Search Experience (JSE)

JSE was conducted annually in July from 2002 to 2013. Results of similar surveys on the job search experience of unemployed persons conducted in July 1984, July 1985, June 1986, July 1988, July 1990, June 1991, and annually from July 1992 to July 2001 were published in various issues of [Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (cat. no. 6222.0). Information on people who had started work for an employer for wages or salary during the 12 months up to the end of the reference week was collected in June 1986 and two-yearly from July 1990 to July 2000 and was published in [Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6245.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6245.0) (cat. no. 6245.0).

For more information on the history of changes to JSE, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6222.0).

Labour Mobility

Labour Mobility and similar surveys were conducted in November 1972, February 1975, February 1976, annually from February 1979 to February 1992 and biennially from February 1994 to February 2012 and most recently in February 2013. Results of previous surveys were published in [Labour Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6209.0).

For more information on the history of changes to LMOB, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6209.0).

Related publications

ABS publications which may also be of interest include:

- [Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0)
- [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001)
- [Microdata: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/6226.0.00.001) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/6226.0.00.001) (cat. no. 6226.0.00.001)
- [Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6602.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6602.0) (cat. no. 6602.0)

Technical note - data quality

Introduction

1 The estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample survey. Any data collection may encounter factors, known as non-sampling error, which can impact on the reliability of the resulting statistics. Non-sampling error may occur in any collection, whether it is based on a sample or a full count such as a census. Sources of non-sampling error include non-response, errors in reporting by respondents or recording of answers by interviewers and errors in coding and processing data. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error by careful design and testing of questionnaires, training and supervision of interviewers, and extensive editing and quality control procedures at all stages of data processing. The reliability of estimates based on sample surveys are also subject to sampling error.

Sampling variability and sampling error

2 Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, and not an entire population, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those estimates that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

3 Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate.

$$RSE\% = \left(\frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

4 RSEs for Participation, Job Search and Mobility estimates have been calculated using the Jackknife method of variance estimation. This process involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on 30 different sub-samples of the original sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these sub-samples is used to estimate the sample variability surrounding the main estimate.

5 The data cubes in the Data download section contain all the tables produced for this release and the calculated RSEs for each of the estimates. The RSEs for estimates other than medians have been calculated using the Jackknife method, and RSEs for the medians have been calculated using the Woodruff method.

6 In the tables in this publication, only estimates (numbers, percentages, means and medians) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included. Estimates with an RSE in the range

25% to 50% should be used with caution while estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are considered too unreliable for general use. All cells in the data cubes with RSEs greater than 25% contain a comment indicating the size of the RSE. These cells can be identified by a red indicator in the corner of the cell. The comment appears when the mouse pointer hovers over the cell.

Calculation of standard error

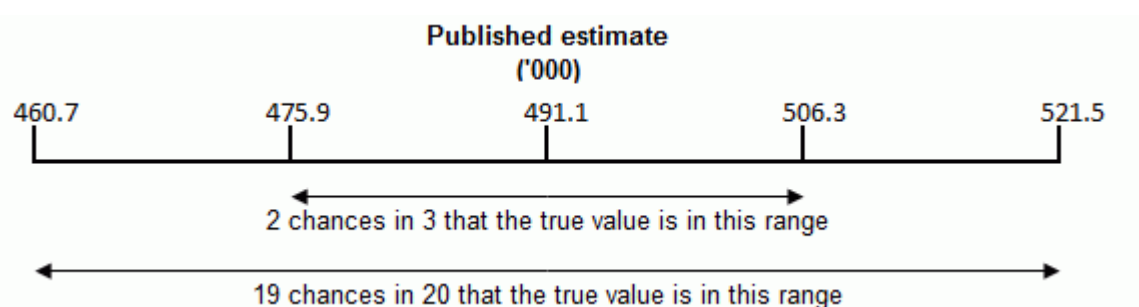
7 RSEs are routinely presented as the measure of sampling error in this publication and related products. SEs can be calculated using the estimates (counts or means) and the corresponding RSEs.

8 An example of the calculation of the SE from an RSE follows. An estimate of underemployed males for February 2020 was 491,100, which has an RSE of 3.1%. The SE is:

SE of estimate

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \left(\frac{\text{RSE}}{100} \times \text{estimate} \right) \\
 &= 0.031 \times 491,100 \\
 &= 15,200 \text{ (rounded to the nearest 100)}
 \end{aligned}$$

9 Therefore, there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey would fall within the range 475,900 to 506,300 and about 19 chances in 20 that the value would fall within the range 460,700 to 521,500. This example is illustrated in the following diagram.



Proportions and percentages

10 Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSEs of proportions not provided in the spreadsheets is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y.

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

11 Considering an estimate of 12,981,500 employed persons, 1,176,000 or 9.06% were underemployed. The RSE for 1,176,000 is 2.0% and the RSE for 12,981,500 is 0.4%. Applying the above formula, the RSE for the proportion who were underemployed is:

$$RSE = \sqrt{(2.0)^2 - (0.4)^2} = 1.96\%$$

12 Therefore, the SE for the proportion who were underemployed was .18 percentage points (= (1.96/100) x .09). Therefore, there are about two chances in three that the proportion of underemployed workers is between 8.9% and 9.2%, and 19 chances in 20 that the proportion was within the range 8.7% to 9.4%.

Sums or differences between estimates

13 Published estimates may also be used to calculate the sum of two or more estimates, or the difference between two survey estimates (of numbers, means or percentages) where these are not provided in the spreadsheets. Such estimates are also subject to sampling error.

14 The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

15 The sampling error of the sum of two estimates is calculated in a similar way. An approximate SE of the sum of two estimates (x+y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x + y) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 + [RSE(y)]^2}$$

16 For example, an estimate of males aged 55–64 years who were underemployed part-time workers was 47,000, and the SE for this estimate was 5,600 (rounded to the nearest 100). For males aged 65 years and over, the number who were underemployed part-time workers was 13,800 and the SE was 3,100. The estimate of the combined age group i.e. males aged 55 years and over who were underemployed part-time workers is:

$$47,000 + 13,800 = 60,800$$

17 The SE of the estimate of males aged 55 years and over who were underemployed part-

time workers is:

$$SE = \sqrt{(5,600)^2 + (3,100)^2} = 6,400$$

18 Therefore, there are about 2 chances in 3 that the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey would fall within the range 54,400 to 67,200 and about 19 chances in 20 that the value would fall within the range 48,000 to 73,600.

19 While these formulae will only be exact for sums of, or differences between, separate and uncorrelated characteristics or subpopulations, it is expected to provide a good approximation for all sums or differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

Standard errors of means and sums

20 The estimates of means and sums of continuous variables are subject to sampling variability and random adjustment. As for population estimates, the variability due to sampling and random adjustment is combined into the calculated standard error, and the relative standard error is reported. The component of variability arising from sampling is calculated using the Jackknife method.

Standard errors of quantiles

21 The estimates of quantiles such as medians, quartiles, quintiles and deciles are subject to sampling variability and random adjustment. As for population estimates, the variability due to sampling and random adjustment is combined into the calculated standard error, and the relative standard error is reported. The component of variability arising from sampling is calculated using the Woodruff method. This is also true for equal distribution quantiles.

Significance testing

22 A statistical test for any comparisons between estimates can be performed to determine whether it is likely that there is a significant difference between two corresponding population characteristics. The standard error of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula in paragraph 10. This standard error is then used to calculate the following test statistic:

$$\left(\frac{x-y}{SE(x-y)} \right)$$

23 If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96 then there is evidence, with a 95% level of confidence, of a statistically significant difference in the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a difference between the populations with respect to that characteristic.

Glossary

Show all

Actively looking for work

People who were taking active steps to find work. Active steps comprise:

- wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer for work
- answered an advertisement for a job on the Internet, in a newspaper or on noticeboards
- had an interview with an employer
- contacted friends or relatives
- took steps to purchase or start up own business
- advertised or tendered for work
- registered with a jobactive Australia provider
- registered with other employment agency.

Actual hours of work

Actual hours of work refers to a specified reference period (e.g. a week) and includes:

- hours actually worked during normal periods of work
- time spent in addition to hours worked during normal periods of work (including overtime)
- time spent at the place of work on activities such as the preparation of the workplace, repairs and maintenance, preparation and cleaning of tools, and the preparation of receipts, time sheets and reports
- time spent at the place of work waiting or standing by due to machinery or process breakdown, accident, lack of supplies, power or internet access, etc.
- time corresponding to short rest periods (resting time) including tea and coffee breaks or prayer breaks
- travel time connected to work (excluding commuting time), and
- training and skills enhancement related to the job or employer.

Excluded are:

- hours paid for but not worked, such as paid annual leave, public holidays or paid sick leave
- meal breaks (e.g. lunch breaks)
- paid and unpaid time 'on call'
- time spent on travel to and from work when no productive activity for the job is performed (e.g. commuting time), and
- time off during working hours to attend outside educational activities, even if it is authorised, e.g. those not connected to the job or employer.

For multiple job holders, PJSM includes separate measure of actual hours worked in main job and in all jobs.

Age of youngest child

Age of the youngest child, 15 years and under, in the household.

Available to start work

Refers to employed or unemployed persons who were available to start work or more hours either in the reference week, or in the four weeks subsequent to the interview.

Available to start work within four weeks

People who were available to start work within four weeks or, for people with children aged 12 years and under, could start work within four weeks if suitable child care was available.

Change in work

Employees were considered to have had some change in work if they had been with their current employer for one year or more at February 2020 and reported that, in the 12 months to February 2020, they had:

- been promoted
- transferred to a different position
- changed usual hours worked, or
- changed occupation.

Civilian population aged 15 years and over

All usual residents of Australia aged 15 years and over except members of the permanent defence forces, certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated population counts, overseas residents in Australia, and members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

Contributing family workers

People who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative.

Did not want to work

People who were not classified as employed or unemployed who answered 'no' when asked if they would like a job.

Discouraged job seekers

People with marginal attachment to the labour force who did not have a job to go to, or return to, wanted to work and were available to start work within the next four weeks but whose main reason for not actively looking for work was that they believed they would not find a job for any of the following reasons:

- considered to be too young or too old by employers
- believes ill health or disability discourages employers
- lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience
- difficulties because of language or ethnic background
- no jobs in their locality or line of work
- no jobs in suitable hours; and
- no jobs at all.

Duration of current period of insufficient work

For full-time workers who worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week due to economic reasons, refers to the number of weeks they have been working fewer than 35 hours a week.

For part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours, refers to the number of weeks they have wanted to work more hours.

As periods of insufficient work are recorded in full weeks and rounded down, this results in a slight understatement of duration.

Duration of current period of unemployment

The period of time from when an unemployed person began looking for work until the end of the reference week; or the period of time since an unemployed person last worked in any job for two weeks or more until the end of the reference week; whichever was the shorter period. Brief periods of work (of less than two weeks) since the person began looking for work are disregarded.

Duration of looking for work before current job

The number of weeks or years that employed persons were looking for work before being offered their current job or starting their own business. For employed persons who had worked before, it includes any time they were looking for work before leaving their previous employer.

Economic reasons

Economic reasons for full-time workers having worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week are:

- there was no work or not enough work available, e.g. due to material shortages, or
- they were stood down.

Employed persons

All people aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers), or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers), or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement
 - on strike or locked out
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were owner managers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Employees

An employed person who does not operate their own incorporated or unincorporated enterprise. An employee works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, on a commission basis (with or without a retainer), tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind.

Family

Two or more people, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering; and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

Family reasons for not actively looking for work

Includes ill health of someone other than themselves, caring for children and other family considerations.

First job ever held lasting two weeks or more

Refers to employees (excluding Owner Managers of Incorporated Enterprises (OMIEs)) who had never worked for two weeks or more before starting their current job.

Full-time preference

People who preferred to work 35 hours or more a week.

Full-time or part-time status of last job

The perception of people of whether they worked full-time or part-time in their last job.

Full-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and others who, although usually working fewer than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

Future starters

People waiting to start, within four weeks of the end of the reference week, a new job that they have already obtained (and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then). Under International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines, these people do not have to be actively looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

Had a job to go or return to

People who were waiting to start a job, but would not be starting within four weeks. Also includes people who had a job but, up to the end of the reference week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

Had worked before

Refers to employees (excluding OMIEs) who had worked before and were either out of work or changed their employer before starting their current job.

Industry

An industry is a group of businesses or organisations that undertake similar economic activities to produce goods and/or services. In this publication, industry refers to ANZSIC Division as classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\), 2006 \(Revision 2.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0>) (cat. no. 1292.0).

Intention to enter the labour force in the next 12 months

The intention of people to work or look for work in the 12 months following the interview.

Interstate

Refers to whether people were prepared to move to another state or territory if offered a

suitable job.

Intrastate

Refers to whether people were prepared to move to another part of their state or territory if offered a suitable job.

Job

Any paid employment, full-time or part-time, lasting two weeks or more.

Job starters

Employed persons who started their current job in the previous 12 months.

Labour force

For any group, people who were employed or unemployed, as defined.

Left a job

People who are classified as voluntarily ceasing their last job.

Level of highest educational attainment

Level of highest educational attainment identifies the highest achievement a person has attained in any area of study. It is not a measurement of the relative importance of different fields of study but a ranking of qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular area of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0) Level of education classification.

Level of highest non-school qualification

A person's level of highest non-school qualification is the highest qualification a person has attained in any area of formal study other than school study. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0) Level of education classification.

Long-term underemployed

People whose duration of current period of insufficient work is 12 months or more.

Long-term unemployed

People whose duration of current period of unemployment is 12 months or more.

Looking for work with more hours

Looked for work with more hours at some time during the four weeks up to the end of the reference week.

Lost a job

People who have worked for two weeks or more in the past two years and who left that job involuntarily.

Main activity when not in the labour force

The main activity of persons who are not in the labour force since they last worked or looked for work (or in the last 12 months if they haven't worked in the last year).

Main difficulty in finding work

The self reported main difficulty in finding work experienced during the current period of unemployment.

Main job

The job in which most hours are usually worked.

Marginal attachment to the labour force

Persons who were not in the labour force in the reference week, wanted to work and:

- were actively looking for work but did not meet the availability criterion to be classified as unemployed; or
- were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks; or
- had a job to go to but were not available to start in the reference week.

The criteria for determining those in the labour force are based on activity (i.e. working or looking for work) and availability to start work during the reference week. The criteria associated with marginal attachment to the labour force, in particular the concepts of wanting to work and reasons for not actively looking for work, are more subjective. Hence, the measurement against these criteria is affected by the respondent's own interpretation of the concepts used. An individual respondent's interpretation may be affected by their work aspirations, as well as family, economic and other commitments.

For more information see article [Understanding the Australian Labour Force Using ABS Statistics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6202.0main+features999Dec%202013\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6202.0main+features999Dec%202013) in [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts)

[/6202.0Main%20Features1Dec%202013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6202.0&issue=Dec%202013&num=&view=\)](#) (6202.0).

Non-economic reasons

Non-economic reasons for full-time workers having worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week include:

- annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave
- own illness, injury or sick leave
- standard work arrangements or shift work
- personal reasons, studying, caring for sick or injured family members
- maternity, paternity or parental leave
- bad weather or plant breakdown
- on strike, locked out, or industrial dispute
- end of seasonal work.

Not available to start work

Refers to people who were not available to start work with more hours either in the reference week, or in the four weeks following the interview.

Not fully employed

People who are not fully employed comprise part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours, and full-time workers who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons.

Number of offers of employment

The number of separate offers of employment received during the current period of unemployment.

Occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation which are grouped together for the purposes of classification. In this publication, occupation refers to Major Group and Sub-Major Group as defined by [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2013, Version 1.2](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument>) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Owner managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIEs)

People who work in their own incorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity which is

registered as a separate legal entity to its members or owners (also known as a limited liability company). These people are sometimes classified as employees. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises (OMUEs)

People who operate their own unincorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity in which the owner and the business are legally inseparable, so that the owner is liable for any business debts that are incurred. Includes those engaged independently in a trade or profession. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Part-time preference

People who preferred to work one to 34 hours a week.

Part-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked fewer than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work during the reference week.

Personal reasons for not actively looking for work¹

People with personal reasons for not actively looking for work include:

- own short-term illness or injury
- own long-term health condition or disability
- attending an educational institution
- had no need or want to work
- fully occupied with voluntary work
- problems with access to transport
- moved house or holidays.

Persons not in the labour force

Persons not in the labour force can be divided into those who are marginally attached to the labour force, and those who are not. People who are marginally attached to the labour force satisfy some, but not all, of the criteria required to be classified as unemployed.

Persons not in the labour force are considered to be marginally attached to the labour force if they:

- wanted to work and were actively looking for work (but, unlike unemployed persons, were not available to start work in the reference week), or
- wanted to work and were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks, or
- had a job to go to but were not available to start in the reference week.

Persons not in the labour force are not marginally attached to the labour force if they:

- did not want to work, or
- wanted to work but were not actively looking for work and were not available to start work within four weeks.

Preferred number of hours

The number of hours unemployed persons would like to work each week.

Preferred number of extra hours

The number of extra hours a week an underemployed worker would have preferred to work.

Preferred total number of hours

The total number of hours per week an underemployed worker would prefer to work.

Reasons for turning down job offers¹

Classifies reasons for turning down job offers in current period of unemployment according to the following categories:

- Unsuitable job conditions
 - unsatisfactory pay or conditions
 - not in locality or line of work
 - hours unsuitable
 - unwilling to move state or city
 - too far to travel
- Personal reasons
 - own short-term illness or injury
 - own long-term health condition or disability
 - pregnancy
 - welfare or pension payments may be affected
 - returned to study
- Family reasons
 - child care
 - caring for an ill or elderly person or family member
- Other
 - waiting to start another job or starting a new business
 - other reasons
 - did not know.

Skill level of occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation which are grouped together for the purposes of classification. In this publication, skill level of occupation refers to the skill levels defined for each occupation in the [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2013, Version 1.2 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Status of employment

Classifies employed persons according to the following categories on the basis of their current job:

- Employees
 - with paid leave entitlements
 - without paid leave entitlements
- Owner managers of incorporated enterprises
 - with employees
 - without employees
- Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises
 - with employees
 - without employees
- Contributing family workers.

Stood down

People who are in a situation where an employer is unable to provide useful work for its employees, for a particular period of time, for circumstances beyond its control.

Suitable job

A suitable job is:

- any job for which the person is qualified (if applicable), is capable of performing and which provides adequate job conditions (including pay, hours, travel to work, etc.)
- a job that would be accepted by the person irrespective of whether a move was required.

Time since last job

The elapsed time since ceasing the last job.

Underemployed workers

Underemployed workers are employed persons who would prefer, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have. They comprise:

- part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours and were available to start work with more hours, either in the reference week or in the four weeks subsequent to the survey; and
- full-time workers who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available). It is assumed that these people would prefer to work full time in the reference week and would have been available to do so.

Underutilisation rate

The sum of the number of people unemployed and the number of the people in underemployment, expressed as a proportion of the labour force.

Unemployed

People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Unemployment rate

For any group, the number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.

Usual hours of work

Usual hours of work refers to a typical period rather than the hours worked in a specified reference period. The concept of usual hours applies both to people at work and to people temporarily absent from work, and is defined as the hours worked during a typical week or day. Actual hours worked (for a specific reference period) may differ from usual hours worked due to illness, vacation, strike, overtime work, a change of job, or similar reasons.

Wanted to work

Persons not in the labour force who were not actively looking for work who answered 'yes' or 'maybe' when asked if they would like a job, as well as those persons not in the labour force who were actively looking. It is assumed those people actively looking want a job.

With paid leave entitlements

The entitlement of employees to either paid holiday leave or paid sick leave (or both) in their current job. People employed in their own business or who were contributing family workers were not asked questions about paid leave entitlements.

Without paid leave entitlements

Employees who were not entitled to, or did not know whether they were entitled to, paid holiday leave and paid sick leave in their current job.

End note

1. Reasons provided by respondents in this item are not mutually exclusive categories.

Quality declaration - summary

Institutional environment

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see [ABS Institutional Environment \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument).

Relevance

The 2020 Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) survey presents information about participation, underemployment, marginal attachment, job mobility and job search. The collection of a range of socio-demographic and labour force characteristics makes the datasets produced from the survey extremely valuable for comparing and analysing a person's experience relating to job search, job change and increasing participation, all of which can be cross classified by other employment characteristics such as hours worked, industry, occupation and sector of job as well as personal characteristics.

Timeliness

The Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey was conducted in February 2020 as a supplement to the ABS monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from this survey are released in the publication Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0).

Accuracy

Estimates from the PJSM are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Relative standard error (RSE) is a measure of the size of the sampling error affecting an estimate, i.e. the error introduced by basing estimates on a sample of the population rather than the full population. Non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur due to imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data.

This publication was designed primarily to provide estimates at the Australia level. Broad estimates are available for state/territory and/or capital city/balance of state, though users should exercise caution when using estimates at this level because of the presence of high sampling errors. Relative standard errors for all estimates are available in the relevant data cube.

For further information regarding the accuracy of the PJSM survey estimates, including standard errors, see the Technical note.

Coherence

This survey will inform on the following broad labour market issues - labour force participation potential, underemployment and marginal attachment, as well as job search experience and labour mobility. This information can be cross classified by characteristics such as duration of job search, last job details, hours worked, industry and occupation as well as personal characteristics.

Caution should be exercised when comparing results from the 2020 PJSM survey with previous years topics as Persons Not In The Labour Force (PNILF) and Underemployed Workers (UEW) were previously collected in September, Job Search Experience (JSE) in July and Labour Mobility (LMOB) was collected in February. Collection of data from this combined survey was undertaken in February. The populations used in each may not be directly comparable.

For information on the comparability of time series for the publication [Persons Not In The Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0) (cat. no. 6220.0), see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument).

For information on the comparability of time series for the publication [Underemployed Workers, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0) (cat. no. 6265.0), see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument).

For information on the comparability of time series for the publication [Job Search Experience, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (cat. no. 6222.0), see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument).

For information on the comparability of time series for the publication [Labour Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6209.0), see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument).

Interpretability

Contained within PJSM are data cubes with commented data to aid interpretation of the results of the survey. Detailed Explanatory Notes, a Technical Note and a Glossary are also included providing information on the terminology, classifications and other technical aspects associated with these statistics.

Further commentary is often available through articles and data published in other ABS products, including, [Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) and [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6102.0.55.001~Feb%202018~Main%20Features~About%20this%20Release~9999) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6102.0.55.001~Feb%202018~Main%20Features~About%20this%20Release~9999) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

Data access

Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0) is released electronically via the ABS website as data cubes in spreadsheet format. Additional data may be available on request (subject to data quality). Note that detailed data can be subject to high relative standard errors.

For users who wish to undertake a more detailed analysis of the data, the survey microdata will be released through the TableBuilder product. For more details, refer to the TableBuilder information, [Microdata, Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia](#)

(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/PrimaryMainFeatures/6226.0.00.001?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 6226.0.00.001). For more information see [About TableBuilder](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder>)

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For more information about ABS data available on request, contact National Information and Referral Service in Canberra on 1300 135 070 or via email to client.services@abs.gov.au (<mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au>), or contact the Labour Surveys Branch on labour.statistics@abs.gov.au (<mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>).